

NATURALLY KENTUCKY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION

Number 2, April 1990



Westward Ho!

Monkeys Eyebrow, Shucks, and Hard Money are a long way from Frankfort. And who would have ever thought that you can go to New York and never leave Kentucky. Right now these areas are unfamiliar to the Commission, but not for long.

The Commission and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources have joined forces to undertake a unique two-year study of the far western corner of the state, the Jackson Purchase. Over the next two years, Commission biologists headquartered at Murray State University will attempt to locate the highest quality natural areas in Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall and McCracken counties. Landon McKinney and Bill Hendricks will be attempting to document the biological treasures of this fascinating area. Landon, a botanist, will be on the lookout for rare and unusual plants and will be identifying the remaining natural areas of the region. Bill, a zoologist, will be listening for birds, grabbing slithering snakes, sneaking through swamps after bird-voiced treefrogs, and trying to outsmart the always elusive cotton mouse. Bill's job is to find out what creatures call the Purchase home.

The results of this study are critical. The natural features of the Purchase have been greatly altered and our knowledge of the area does not reflect the beauty and diversity that it contributes to the Commonwealth. Stay tuned, we will keep you informed about this project in future Newsletters.



Kentucky Wetlands

Celebrate 20 Years of Global Stewardship

April 22, 1990 will be the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day. People around the world will gather to celebrate twenty years of concern and activism for the welfare of our planet. On Earth Day people will be reviewing their commitment to protect our Earth and encouraging others to do so as well.

Since Earth Day 1970, the people of the United States have worked hard for the creation of numerous laws to safeguard our environment. We still face such devastating issues as global warming, acid rain, destruction of tropical rain forests, and safe disposal of solid and toxic wastes.

These problems reach beyond our country's borders and must be considered as serious threats at the global level. That is why Earth Day has such meaning. The goals of Earth Day 1990 are to renew and strengthen our commitment to promoting and supporting environmentally sound lifestyles in addition to protecting the Earth's resources that are vital to life.

The citizens of Kentucky will have many opportunities to participate in Earth Day celebrations. Schools, churches, towns, and cities are preparing activities for Earth Year as well as Earth Day. The Commission has arranged for celebratory activities on most of the state nature preserves throughout the month of April. Please check the following schedule of events and feel free to attend as many as you wish. If you have any questions, please contact the activity leader, or call Joyce Bender at the Commission office. Please remember to take the "Green Pledge" to show your concern for our Earth. The pledge card is found as an insert in this issue of the newsletter. Send your signed pledge to the Earth Day Management Team before April 22 so that you can be included in the national count of concerned Americans.

NATURAL AREAS INVENTORIES: THE FIRST RESULTS

The first Natural Areas Inventory, completed in 1989, focused on Logan, Simpson and Warren counties, located in the Pennyroyal region of south-central Kentucky. At the time of settlement in the late 18th century, the vegetation of the survey area consisted primarily of vast tracts of mostly deciduous forest but with large areas of prairie occurring mostly in the south. Barrens, an open, drier woodland with a savanna-like appearance, occupied a large area. Limestone and sandstone glades also occurred in widely scattered places. Wetlands occurred in the poorly drained areas in the bottomlands and in scattered upland sinkholes and depressions. A total of 149 areas were surveyed; of these, 11 were designated as significant natural areas, and 16 were designated as notable natural areas. The protection of these areas is currently being worked toward by the KSNPC and The Nature Conservancy. Already, Flat Rock Glade, the finest known example of a flat rock limestone glade in Kentucky, has been purchased by The Nature Conservancy.

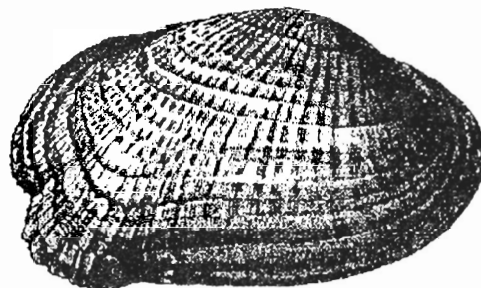
Boone and Gallatin counties were inventoried for natural areas in 1989. Deciduous forests covered the vast majority of these counties in the late 18th century. Much of the area was probably closed canopy mesophytic forest; however, the more open Bluegrass savanna occurred on the rich, moist uplands. Buffalo traces crossed the area, and small hillside prairie patches were scattered about. Wetlands occurred along the Ohio River and along some of the other, larger drainages. Of the 55 surveyed areas, four were designated as significant natural areas, and two were designated as notable natural areas. Two of these areas, Dinsmore Woods and Boone Cliffs are owned by The Nature Conservancy; most of Boone Cliffs is a dedicated state nature preserve also. The finest old-growth woods in the area was found to be in the new Boone County Park across from the Dinsmore home.

MUSSELS AN IMPORTANT PART OF HERITAGE PROGRAM

During the summer of 1989, the Commission completed an inventory of the freshwater mussels of the Green River in Mammoth Cave National Park (MCNP). Mussels are inconspicuous but important parts of our natural heritage. These bottom-dwelling animals have colorful names like snuffbox, pistolgrip, and monkeyface and help clean our streams and rivers as they filter food from the water in which they live. Because of this intimate relationship with and dependence upon water,

mussels are excellent barometers of stream and environmental quality. Also, animals such as fishes, muskrats, and raccoons relish mussels at meal time.

Unfortunately, this lifestyle and a variety of human developmental activities have conspired against our mussel fauna. Fully half of what was once one of the most diverse faunas in North America is now either rare or no longer exists in Kentucky. Since many of these rare mussels are known to have occurred in the



Cumberlandian Combshell

Green River, the National Park Service, a strong proponent of the protection of natural diversity, contracted with us to identify the MCNP fauna. Our efforts revealed the presence of 46 mussel species in the Park and the strong possibility that at least five more species may be found. This segment of the Green River ranks near the top nationally among rivers in the number of mussel species it supports. And quite often the presence of one highly diverse group like the mussels means that other groups such as fishes and insects are also richly represented. Amazingly enough, almost one-third of the mussel species found are considered rare in Kentucky or nationally! For some of these species, the Green River in MCNP is one of only a very few strongholds remaining in the world.

Protecting our few remaining high quality streams like the Green River and the rare plants and animals they support is a very difficult task. In-depth inventory efforts designed to reveal the presence of rare organisms are the first step of any protection effort. Armed with this information, agencies such as the National Park Service can more closely monitor the mussels in MCNP and activities within and outside the Park that may affect them. Also, for the first time this summer Park naturalists will alert MCNP visitors to the natural wonders hidden by the Green River as well as those in the depths of Mammoth Cave. And won't those folks be surprised to hear that the river is full of snuffboxes, pistolgrips, and monkeyfaces!



GREEN PLEDGE

EARTH DAY 1990

Millions of Americans are searching for an effective and dramatic vehicle to demonstrate their concern for the environment. Earth Day 1990 will be encouraging individuals to commit "for the record" by signing a "pledge" challenging citizens to honor the environment when they vote, purchase, consume, and invest.

Earth Day 1990 organizers will be orchestrating mass distribution of the pledges through direct mail and telephone outreach and by means of Earth Day 1990 events and activities. The signed pledges will be distributed by Earth Day 1990 to elected officials and tabulated for national and international media release.

The Earth Day 1990 pledges will demonstrate the sheer numbers of Americans who are willing to commit to a better environment and, importantly, expect their law makers and fellow citizens to do the same.

Detach and return

Place
Postage
Here

Kentucky Earth Day 1990 Management Team
Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet
5th Floor Capital Plaza Tower
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

EARTH DAY 1990



GREEN PLEDGE

BECAUSE... our planet today faces severe environmental crises such as global warming, rain forest devastation, growing world population, and water and air pollution...

BECAUSE... the planet's future depends on the commitment of every nation, as well as every individual...

**I PLEDGE TO DO MY SHARE IN SAVING THE PLANET
BY LETTING MY CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SHAPE HOW I:**

- ACT:** I pledge to do my utmost to recycle, conserve energy, save water, use efficient transportation, and try to adopt a lifestyle as if every day were Earth Day.
- PURCHASE:** I pledge to buy and use only those products least harmful to the environment. Moreover, I will do business with corporations that promote global environmental responsibility.
- VOTE:** I pledge to vote and support those candidates who demonstrate an abiding concern for the environment.
- SUPPORT:** I pledge to support the passage of local, state and federal laws and international treaties that protect the environment.

Earth Day 1990 — April 22, 1990

(tear here)

**LET EARTH DAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE JOINED THOUSANDS OF OTHERS
IN TAKING THE GREEN PLEDGE!**

Signature

Name (please print)

Street

City

State

Zip

Phone number

Detach and return to
**Kentucky Earth Day 1990 Management Team
Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet
5Th Floor Capital Plaza Tower
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601**

EARTH DAY ACTIVITIES

Bad Branch State Nature Preserve,
Letcher County

Learn about wildflowers hike. April
21, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the Preserve
/ Contact: Dan Danford
(606) 633-8018

Blackacre State Nature Preserve,
Jefferson County

Arbor Day Celebration - Co-
sponsored by the Division of
Forestry - Free Tree giveaway and
planting demonstration. April 7,
noon to 4:00 p.m. Meet at the
Preserve / Contact: David Wicks
(502) 473-3437

Beargrass Creek State Nature Preserve,
Jefferson County

Nature Hike. April 14, 9:30 a.m.
Meet at Preserve / Contact: Wally
Roberts (502) 456-4650

Boone County Cliffs State Nature
Preserve

Earth Day hike cosponsored by The
Nature Conservancy of Kentucky.
April 22, 10:00 a.m. Meet at the
Preserve / Contact: Barry Dalton
(502) 875-3529

John James Audubon State Park Nature
Preserve, Henderson County

Earth Day Celebration. April 22 /
Contact: Park Naturalist for
information (502) 826-2247

Natural Bridge State Park Nature
Preserve, Powell County

Earth Day Celebration. April 22
/ Contact: Park Naturalist for
information (606) 663-2214

Cumberland Falls State Park Nature
Preserve, McCreary County

Photography Weekend with a
focus on Earth Day. April 20-
22 / Contact: Park Naturalist for
information (606) 528-4121

Pilot Knob State Nature Preserve,
Powell County

Earth Day Hike. April 22, 1:00
p.m. Meet at the Preserve /
Contact: Dr. Roy Kepferle
(606) 622-1273

Brigadoon State Nature Preserve,
Barren County

Earth Day Hike - Bird watching
and wildflower identification.
April 22, 8:00 a.m. Meet at the
Preserve / Contact: Wayne
Mason (502) 745-3696

Metropolis Lake State Nature
Preserve, McCracken County

Earth Day Celebration, clean up
sponsored by Heath Elementary
and Heath High School. April
20 / Contact: Wana Grandon
(502) 488-3131

Carter Caves State Resort Park,
Carter County (Bat Cave and Cascade
Caverns State Nature Preserves)

Earth Day Celebration. The
Highlands Group of the
Cumberland Chapter of the
Sierra Club and Boy Scouts
from the tri-county area are
sponsoring all day events.
April 21, 9:00 a.m. / Contact:
Mark Hamilton (606) 833-3448

Pine Mountain State Park Nature
Preserve, Bell County

Earth Day Celebration. April
22 / Contact: Park Naturalist
for information (606) 337-3066

Blue Licks Battlefield State Park
Nature Preserve, Robertson County

Earth Day Hike. April 22,
1:00 p.m. / Contact: Park
Naturalist for information
(606) 289-5507

MEETING NOTICE

The next quarterly Commission
meeting will be held on May 16, 1990
at 9:00 a.m. at Rough River State
Resort Park. The public is invited to
attend all Commission meetings. For
more information, contact the
Commission office.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that seven
species of herons and egrets
nest in Kentucky, gathering
together in colonies of a few
to more than three hundred
nesting pairs? Most, like the
Black-crowned and Yellow-
crowned Night-Heron, are
found in association with
natural wetlands and
floodplains.

Some, like The Great
Egret, have only recently
returned to Kentucky as
nesting species following many
years of decline from the
widespread use of DDT and
habitat loss. Others, like The
Great Blue Heron, are already
incubating eggs, after having
initiated courtship in late
winter.

Three of Kentucky's
major heron "rookeries" are
now protected as part of the
voluntary Natural Areas
Registry Program, and three
others are in the process of
being protected through
agreements with state and
federal agencies.

**Kentucky State
Nature Preserves Commission
407 Broadway, Frankfort, KY 40601
502/564-2886**

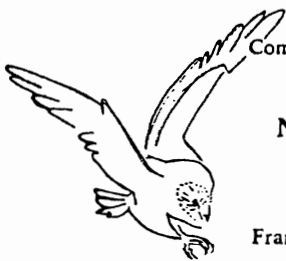
COMMISSIONERS

Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown, Chairman
Hugh Archer, Secretary
Harold Duckworth
Randall Farris
Kenneth Jackson

STAFF

Director - Richard Hannan
Stewardship Coordinator - Joyce Bender
Data Manager - Tom Bloom
Zoologist - Ron Cicerello
Botanist - Marc Evans
Zoologist - Bill Hendricks
Botanist - Landon McKinney
Assistant Data Manager - Laurel McNeil
Zoologist - Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.
Office Manager - Linda Pollock
Secretary - Melissa Shramm

Biologist - M. Shramm



Commonwealth of Kentucky

**Kentucky State
Nature Preserves
Commission**

Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

**Bulk Rate
US Postage
PAID
Frankfort, KY
Permit # 379**